

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

You probably have a lot of questions as you start your new job. "When is payday? What are my working hours? Am I on probation? Where do I pick up my paycheck?" This chapter will try to answer those questions so that you may begin to understand what to expect from your new employer and what your employer expects of you.

The following information is presented as a guide and is not intended to be the official authority on the topics discussed below. Authority for the following information can be found in the Fresno Municipal Code, applicable labor agreements, the Salary Resolution, or in Administrative Instructions issued by the City Manager. Please refer to any of these sources or ask your supervisor if you need additional information on any of the topics discussed below.

#### **Employee Status**

You will hear a lot of terms used describing employee status - don't try to learn and understand them all in the first week. Some of the differences are difficult to understand and even more difficult to explain. Here is a brief description of the things you will need to know during your first few months on the job. All of the definitions are given in **Municipal Code Section 2-1601**.

If you have been interviewed and selected for a civil service position, you are appointed to that position in a **probationary status**. Since probation is considered a part of the testing and selection process, you are periodically evaluated by your supervisor during this time. Probation periods last either six months or a year depending on your job class.

If you are not performing satisfactorily during this probationary period, you can be released from your position for the good of the service at any time. Probationary employees who have been released from service do not have the right to appeal their release to the Civil Service Board. Any leave taken during the probationary period will extend the period accordingly.

Some employees do not serve a probationary period. Unclassified employees serve at the pleasure of the City Manager or Department Director and can be terminated at any time.

Once you have completed your probationary period, you will be given **permanent status**. As a permanent employee, your continued employment will depend on the needs of the department, budget considerations, and your continued satisfactory job performance.

This example takes for granted that you are a **full-time employee**. Often, the City needs someone for part-time or intermittent work. Instead of cutting a full-time employee's hours, or hiring someone new each time, some employees are hired in a **permanent part-time** or **permanent intermittent** status. These employees receive some of the same benefits as permanent full-time employees, but on a different basis.

There are a number of other types of employment status in City service. As you become more familiar with the way the system works, you will hear a lot of terms you don't understand. When you hear these terms, either look them up or ask your supervisor who can give you a clear, knowledgeable answer.

## **Performance Evaluations**

Performance evaluations are required of probationary employees and are conducted every three months during the probationary period. An evaluation reflecting the ability to perform at the higher skill or knowledge level is required before an employee in a "flex" position is promoted to the next level.

Some departments continue to evaluate employees beyond their probationary period, and in some cases these evaluations are reviewed for movement to the next salary step level. You should learn whether you are in one of these departments. There are some basic things to remember about evaluations whether they are being done during probation or after you have become a permanent employee.

1. Your supervisor will review the evaluation with you before it is turned in to Human Resources and placed in your personnel file.
2. You have a right to request a review of the evaluation with the supervisor of the reviewer, but this review cannot be taken past the level of your department head.
3. If you disagree with the evaluation, you can submit a statement which will be attached to the evaluation when it is placed in your personnel file.
4. An appeals process is provided for employees whose step increase is contingent on an annual performance evaluation.

These rules vary somewhat between unions; check your Memorandum of Understanding to be sure what rules apply in your situation.

## **Personnel Records**

Every City Employee has a permanent personnel record which is maintained in the Human Resources Department. These files are considered confidential and access to them is restricted. Any employee may review his or her own personnel file by contacting the Human Resources Department during normal working hours and making an appointment to do so. Be sure to check with your supervisor when you do this so that they will know where you are, and your absence will not interfere with the work schedule.

## **Changes in Personal Information**

Every employee is responsible to keep the Human Resources Department, Payroll Division, and/or their health care plan administrator advised of changes in their personal and family situation. If you get married or have a baby, then your new dependent(s) need to be added to your health care coverage and may mean that you need to change your income tax withholding. A divorce could change your ex-spouse's eligibility for health care coverage. And always be sure that your supervisor knows your current address and telephone number so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.

## **EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Representation and the Agency Shop**

All employees have the right to join and be represented by an employee organization on issues such as wages, hours, working conditions, and terms and conditions of employment. Some bargaining units which represent City employees have agency shop agreements with the City. These agreements mean that anyone holding a position with the City which is covered by such an agreement is required to become a member of the union, or pay a service fee to the union which is equal in amount to union dues. If you are paying a service fee instead of dues, no part of your money can be given to political groups or used for political purposes by the union.

Anyone who has a *bona fide* religious objection to either joining the union or paying a service fee to the union may be able to make a charitable contribution equivalent to union dues to one of the organizations agreed upon between the City and the union. If you have questions about this, contact the Labor Relations Division of Human Resources for more information.

### **Grievances**

A grievance is a dispute concerning the interpretation or application of any existing City policy, written rule, or regulation governing personnel practices or working conditions including the labor agreement between your union and the City. The grievance procedure should not be used when there is some other established procedure for resolving the dispute, such as the Civil Service Board, Retirement Board, etc.

Your union will assist you in resolving a grievance, but you must follow some simple rules:

1. Talk to your supervisor about the problem first, it may be just a misunderstanding that can be easily cleared up by talking it out.
2. If talking to your supervisor doesn't solve the problem, go to your shop steward immediately and explain the problem. If you wish, you can combine these two steps, and take your shop steward with you when you talk to your supervisor.
3. If the grievance can't be settled through this discussion process, it must be filed in writing with the supervisor and a copy sent to Labor Relations. The time limits and some of the procedures vary between unions, so check your labor agreement or talk to your union representative to be sure of what to do.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Every organization has a few rules to regulate when, where, why and how things are done, who does (or doesn't do) them. The City is no different, with the possible exception that our rules are written down in a number of different places. Every employee should be aware of those parts of the labor agreement, the Administrative Orders, Municipal Code, or various State and Federal laws which affect them and their jobs.

Your supervisor should explain those rules that apply to you during your first few days on the job. If you have questions, be sure to ask your supervisor before problems arise. Here are some of the rules you need to be aware of as a new City employee:

## **Working Hours**

Working hours and work schedules vary considerably from one division to another, based on the need to provide service to the public and/or other City departments. There are some characteristics common to all City operations.

These rules about working hours apply to most City employees; however, there are variations. Most police officers normally work four day, ten-hour shifts during their workweek, with each shift including a paid, on-call lunch break. Firefighters work a 24-hour shift, every third day. Some bus drivers work split shifts where the workday is split into two parts, separated by a time period greater than one-half hour in length.

For specific details about your work schedule, working hours and breaks you should consult with your supervisor or refer to your labor agreement.

## **Tardiness and Absences**

Every employee is expected to be present and ready to work at the beginning of every scheduled work shift. **It is your responsibility to inform your supervisor** if you will be late or absent. Some divisions/departments have special rules requiring early notification. Your supervisor has a right to know the reason for your absence or tardiness.

Employees who want to take any kind of leave need to request the leave at least 48 hours in advance and have the leave request signed by their supervisor before beginning their leave. Ask your supervisor for details of your division's rules and procedures. The City's policy on leaves of absence is contained in **Administrative Order 2-19**.

## **Appropriate Attire**

Although there is no official City-wide dress code, you are expected to wear clothing appropriate to the job and work site. Your clothing and personal appearance should be neat, clean, in good business taste, and present a favorable public image of the City and your department.

## **City Uniforms**

You may be required to wear a uniform in the performance of your duties. These uniforms are to be worn for work, which may include travelling to and from work. They are not to be worn at other times. Who provides the uniforms and bears the cost of laundering them will vary depending on your labor agreement, but it is your responsibility to care for them and ensure that they are turned in for laundry as scheduled.

The uniform identifies you as a City employee. The way you wear it and your conduct while you are wearing it should be a good reflection on the City.

## **Identification Cards**

City Employees in some areas are required to wear identification badges either during their regular workday or in order to gain entrance to the area after hours. Some other City employees need to be able to identify themselves to the public such as meter readers or building inspectors. If your job requires that you have an ID badge, your supervisor will have one issued to you. These badges are City property and you are responsible to turn them in when you leave City service.

## **Personal Property in the Workplace**

The City cannot guarantee the safety or security of your personal property and is not responsible for its loss or theft. Employees are cautioned not to keep expensive items in their work areas.

## **Personal Telephone Use**

Personal telephone calls are not to be made on City time or from City phones, if at all avoidable. If you must make or receive occasional personal calls at work, keep them to a minimum. Personal toll or long-distance calls must be charged to your home telephone or credit card.

## **Accepting Gifts and Gratuities**

City employees are prohibited from accepting gifts or gratuities from any outside source on an individual basis for individual use. It is permissible for departments to accept small gifts of food or candy provided that the gift can be consumed within a single working day and the gift is readily available to all employees in the department. These gifts cannot include alcoholic beverages or tobacco products.

## **Work Permits**

Any full-time employee who wishes to work at a second job must obtain a work permit in order to do so. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that your second job does not create a conflict of interest or impair the efficient performance of your City job. One part of the Work Permit application process requires that you provide proof of Workers' Compensation coverage by your outside employer. Work Permit Applications may be obtained from your supervisor, and must be approved before you accept outside employment. If you apply for a work permit and the application is denied, you may request that the Work Permit Review Committee review the application. See **Municipal Code Section 2-1502** for more information.

## **Conducting non-City Business on City Property or During Working Hours**

City employees may not engage in advertising or selling activities during work hours in the workplace. Anyone who is employed as a dealer or distributor for any product must have a Work Permit in order to engage in that business, and should be very careful to confine their activities to break and lunch times away from the work area or after working hours. Interdepartmental Mail, including electronic mail, cannot be used for private business purposes, or to conduct or promote union activities.

## **California Driver's License**

Many City positions require the possession of a valid California License. The primary reason for this is that you may be required to operate City vehicles as part of your job. It is your responsibility to keep your license current. If your license is revoked or suspended for any reason, you must notify your supervisor immediately. You cannot operate any vehicle without a valid license which is properly endorsed for that equipment.

## **Use of City Vehicles**

The City maintains a fleet of vehicles for official use only; they should never be used for personal errands or transportation. If you misuse City vehicles, you will be subject to disciplinary action. If you need to use a city vehicle for your job, your supervisor will show you how to go about checking one out, where to get it serviced, what to do and who to notify if you have an accident or mechanical problems.

## **Use of Personal Vehicles on City Business**

Employees may be required, at the discretion of the City, to use their personal vehicles on City business. If you are required to use your vehicle on City business, you should be reimbursed in accordance with **Administrative Order 2-2**. When use of a personal vehicle is required as a condition of employment for all positions in a class, that will be noted in the class specification for that job class. When it is a requirement only for certain positions in a class, potential employees will be advised of that requirement prior to appointment, transfer or assignment, as appropriate.

## **City Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The City is committed to protecting the health and safety of individual City employees, their co-workers, and the public from the hazards caused by the misuse of drugs and alcohol by its employees. City employees provide a variety of services, many of which require contact with the public. For employees to provide these services effectively, an atmosphere of public trust must exist. Further, many employees are engaged in public safety functions or operate vehicles or other dangerous equipment. The public must be confident that the City has taken reasonable measures to ensure that City employees are performing their duties and making critical judgements free of impairment from drugs or alcohol.

Special random testing is also required for positions which have been identified as safety sensitive under the provisions of the Federal Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991.

A full explanation of the City's policy on drug and alcohol abuse can be found in **Administrative Order 2-25**. Your supervisor should review this policy with you and answer any questions you have.

## **Smoking in City Buildings**

City buildings have been designated "No Smoking" areas. You can find more information in **Administrative Order 8-5**.

## **Safety and Health**

The City follows CAL/OSHA regulations in all matters affecting employee safety and health. We provide information about safety rules, personal protective equipment and training to each employee according to the type of work that is to be done.

The City Safety Officer is appointed by the City Manager and has overall responsibility for implementing the City Safety Program. The City's safety policy is outlined in **Administrative Order 2-3**. The City Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) contains the policies that specifically govern safety.

The Administrative Orders and the IIPP can be found in the Staff Area on the City Web Site "www.ci.fresno.ca.us" and are also available in hard copy through your division. You are encouraged to review these and make suggestions for additions or improvements through your supervisor.

Every employee is responsible to follow safety rules on every job and report unsafe acts, conditions, incidents and accidents that they observe to their supervisor. So, participate in all safety training associated with your job; learn and follow safety rules; and report to work with all assigned protective equipment that is needed to safely accomplish your work. Remember that you are responsible for your personal safety record.

## **Political Activities**

Everyone has a right to belong to the political party of their choice. This includes the right to attend political meetings, to vote as they wish, to seek or accept election or appointment to public office, or to circulate petitions. This right, however, does not extend to the workplace. Political activity is not allowed on the job under any circumstances.

## **Discipline or Corrective Action**

It is the City's policy to administer discipline in a consistent, equitable manner throughout all departments. Work situations obviously differ, so the use of discipline must be tempered by good judgement. No one can foresee every possible situation, so there is no list of specific disciplinary actions for specific types of misconduct. Supervisors are encouraged to consider the circumstances and exercise discretion in imposing disciplinary action on employees.

The Municipal Code provides the authority for disciplinary action. It also defines conduct or misconduct which would be subject to disciplinary action, and outlines both the notice and appeal procedures. For more information, read **Administrative Order 2-14, and Fresno Municipal Code sections 2-1661.5 through 2-1666**, or discuss this subject with your supervisor.